

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Rep. Charlie Melancon has been awarded the "Spirit of Enterprise" award from the United States Chamber of Commerce for his strong voting record on critical business issues in the second session of the 109th Congress.
April 24, 2007
Contact: Robin Winchell (202) 225-4031

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Rep. Charlie Melancon has been awarded the "Spirit of Enterprise" award from the United States Chamber of Commerce for his strong voting record on critical business issues in the second session of the 109th Congress.

"As a former small businessman, I am honored to accept this award from the Chamber on behalf of the millions of businesspeople they represent," said Rep. Melancon. **"In Congress, I will continue to support legislation that will help grow Louisiana's economy and create more and better jobs for south Louisianians."**

"Rep. Melancon proved to be a valuable ally to the business community last year, supporting measures to stimulate job creation and spur economic growth," said Tom Donohue, Chamber president and CEO. "The business community appreciates Charlie's dedication to a pro-growth agenda and we are proud to present him with this award."

The Chamber's prestigious "Spirit of Enterprise" award is given annually to members of Congress based on rankings it gives for key business votes outlined in its yearly publication, *How They Voted*.

Rep. Melancon compiled a 93% score with the Chamber last year and holds a cumulative 80% ranking during his tenure in Congress.

Among the pro-business bills that Rep. Melancon supported was legislation to expand offshore drilling in the Gulf of Mexico and increase Louisiana's share of the royalties derived from this industry. Rep. Melancon helped craft the House version of the bill and secured passage by convincing 39 fellow Democrats to cross party lines and vote in favor of the bill, providing the margin of victory it needed to pass in the House. The historic legislation, which was signed into law last December, will open 8.3 million acres in the Gulf of Mexico to offshore oil and natural gas drilling and share 37.5 percent of the new revenues with Louisiana and the other oil-producing states along the Gulf Coast. The plan is projected to provide for Louisiana a dedicated revenue stream of more than \$13 billion over the next 30 years, which will be used solely for coastal restoration projects.

The Chamber also praised Rep. Melancon for voting in support of extending several important tax relief measures, in support of permanently repeal the death tax, and for a key port security bill, the SAFE Port Act. As a member of the House-Senate conference committee that finalized the SAFE Port Act, Rep. Melancon worked to ensure language was included in the final bill that expanded the eligible criteria for the Department of Homeland Security's Port Security Grant Program to include "energy" ports like Port Fourchon in south Louisiana.

Rep. Melancon broke with the Chamber, however, on a bill to extend normal trade relations with Vietnam. In explaining why he opposed the trade agreement, Rep. Melancon cited Vietnam's failure to reduce their "dumping" of excess seafood on the U.S. market, which has sent the wholesale price of shrimp into a freefall and crippled Louisiana's shrimping industry. The bill failed to pass the House.

"My first responsibility in Congress is to represent the interests of the working people of south Louisiana," said Rep. Melancon. **"I will continue to support pro-business legislation when it's the right thing to do for south Louisiana."**

The U.S. Chamber is the world's largest business federation, representing more than three million businesses and organizations of every size, sector, and region. A complete listing on the key votes and ratings from the Chamber is available online at www.uschamber.com.

###